

Why Men Sin

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From the Bombay "Examiner."

BY the light of reason mankind knows nothing of the supernatural sonship. Many races, both archaic and cultivated, have conceived God as the father of mankind [*Jupiter = Deus-pater, "pater deorum hominumque"*] in the broad sense that He has produced us and that He loves us and provides for us. There is no need to quarrel with the idea taken loosely, though it does not stand good in any strict sense of paternity. The fatherhood of God and the sonship of man, as it exists in the Christian system, is something altogether beyond this, and belongs to a totally different plane. Secondly, natural humanity knows nothing of the notion of habitual grace. If it is recognized that a man can be specially pleasing to God, this is solely on the ground of his natural virtue and piety taken on its own merits. Thirdly, natural humanity knows nothing of actual or operative grace. The idea of some kind of inspiration or mental stimulus coming from above is familiar to all races, and manifests itself in the quasi-instinctive belief in a future life, belief in God as the law-giver at the back of conscience, and in all markedly noble insight into religious truth or aspiration towards virtue. But this still lies within the natural order. If there is anything supernatural underlying such mental movements—and we have the saying of St. John that the Word "enlighteneth *every man* that cometh into the world"—at least the supernaturality of it falls beyond human perception, and therefore lies outside the cognizance of reason.

Hence it follows that if circumstances require us to teach moral truths to non-Christians in such a way as to avoid religious propaganda interfering with their actual creeds, it is necessary to confine ourselves to the

principles of the natural order. We can tell them how they ought to try to be good, and to ask God to help them to be good, and to pray for forgiveness if they fall into sin, and hold up before them the goal of *natural* happiness as the fruit of their endeavors. If at the back of this natural system God is really elevating their good-will and good actions into the supernatural order with a view of giving them the supernatural destiny of heaven, all the better. But if we undertake professedly to teach them only that which is known to reason without revelation, we cannot consistently put before them the system of grace and the supernatural, because this is unknown to reason left to itself, and cannot be proposed to them except on the authority of the Catholic Church, which they from their very position do not recognize. In other words, we must in such a course ignore and pass over the supernatural system, without in any way intending to deny or exclude it.

THE NATURAL POWER OF FREE-WILL.

Next we come to a still more important question, and that is, man's power of securing final happiness by the natural use of his free-will alone. Prescinding from the system of grace altogether, and confining ourselves to the order of nature pure and simple, we are confronted with the axiomatic principle that sin is essentially a free act; for if the act is not free it cannot be sinful. Sin is essentially a voluntary transgression of the Divine law. The law must first of all be known, and when known it must be transgressed with free choice and deliberation. This being the case, it follows that in the order of pure nature every man can of his free-will avoid each and every single sin which comes before him, simply for the reason that if he cannot avoid it it is not a sin. For an act is a sin only just precisely so far as a man can avoid it, and so far as he commits it by pure and simple free-choice.

But in speaking of the order of nature, we must bear in mind a distinction familiar to theologians, who say that mankind left to itself is not in the state of "pure nature" but in the state of "fallen nature." The state of pure nature, they declare, never actually existed. In

the beginning Adam was created in the state of "nature elevated to the supernatural," and therefore endowed with certain qualities and gifts superior to pure nature. By the fall these special qualities and gifts were lost; and fallen man was, they say, in some respects in a worse condition than if he had never been elevated. He was (in technical phrase) "despoiled of his supernatural qualities and wounded or damaged in his natural qualities." His damage consisted in a certain obscuration of the intellect and a certain debilitation of the will. It was not bad enough to destroy free choice, or the power of judging between good and evil; but it took the edge off the keenness of the perception of good, and especially of its appreciation. Moreover in the state of fallen nature the passions and natural inclinations tend to assert themselves more strongly than would be normal to pure nature. Hence while the power of resistance remained, it became much easier and more likely that the will would yield and make a bad choice under the impulsion and attraction of pleasure or the deterrent influence of pain. In this way the fall has induced a certain proneness to sin more emphatic than that of healthy pure nature.

However, we must be quite clear how far this proneness goes. Even fallen nature is not corrupted in its essential qualities. The inherent power of choosing good and avoiding evil still remains. Speaking in general a man can perform each single duty and avoid each single sin which comes before him; and his failures to do so in any given case do not come from want of absolute power, but from easiness of making evil choice, and the fact of experience that every man is practically sure to give way sometime or other.

In short we must carefully steer clear of the Lutheran theory. This theory is that human nature by the fall was rendered inherently corrupt, so that it must sin as a matter of course and as a matter of necessity; that the infusion of grace was not merely an elevation of nature but a canceling of it and a substitution for it; that all acts, precisely as proceeding from man as such, were bad, and it was only by the imputation of Christ's merits that God came to accept them as good. This doctrine

was expressly condemned by the Church as soon as it was broached.

ALL MEN ARE SINNERS.

Nevertheless there is one orthodox sense in which "all men are sinners." If we take mankind as it exists in the state of fallen nature, and in the light of practical experience ask the question: "Will any man by his free-will always avoid all sin all his life through?" We answer "No." Every man is sure to fall into some sin, one time or other. The best-disposed will at least fall occasionally into some smaller sin; while the run of mankind, even with general good dispositions, are practically sure to fall even into serious sin sometimes, especially under stress of painful and difficult temptation.

To Christians this truth is known by Divine revelation. "A man who saith he hath no sin is a liar, and the truth is not in him," says St. John; and St. James; "In many things we all offend." But even putting aside such revealed pronouncements, and taking human nature as we know it, we can make the same assertion with full confidence; and it would require a man of singularly pedantic, priggish and self-conceited mind to deny it. An absolutely sinless human being no one will believe in. We may take it as certain that every man sins occasionally at least; and it would be extremely rare to come across any individual man who has not sinned grievously sometime or other in his life.

Yet although this may be taken as a universal truth, it is not a necessary or metaphysical truth. There is no strict necessity for any man whatever to sin anytime—for the fundamental reason already given; namely that if a sin were necessary it would not be sin. The lapse into sin is not a necessity at all. It is a fact of the concrete order, and it is a fact which follows from the practical limitations of human nature. To put it concretely: there is a certain limit beyond which a man's self-restraint will in point of fact break down, though absolutely it need not do so. If a dentist is drawing my teeth I can, absolutely speaking, bear the pain without shouting, and will do so. But if the tooth-drawing goes on long enough I am sure to give way some time, when the pain

reaches a certain point. Even under that stress I could still resist; but in point of fact I shall not do so. So it is in general life, where all sorts of things are repeatedly tempting us to sin. We need not in any single case give way. But it will be safe to get a wager that some time or other each individual will give way to temptation, just when it takes him at a weak moment. The mind will be conscious of the power to hold out; but yet it will not hold out on that occasion, even though it may have held out on many former occasions. The exercise of control becomes so painful that the spirit breaks down. "I can't stand it any longer" means: "I *won't* because it hurts too much." The will could really hold out, and the giving way is a consent of the will, and not a physical collapse. Thus by way of illustration, the muscles will not snap under a certain weight; but long before we reach that weight the muscles do give way, because the will yields to the pain of holding them up.

BUT THE WILL CAN AVOID SIN.

While thus maintaining as a universal proposition the sinfulness of all men, we must therefore bear in mind that it is a concrete proposition; a point of fact, and not a point of metaphysical principle, or of physical necessity. We must still preach the power of the human will on each and every occasion to choose the right and avoid the wrong. We must, moreover, maintain this power of avoiding sin as part of the inherent constitution of the human will—for the reasons already given which cannot be too often repeated; namely, that sin is essentially a free transgression of the Divine law, and if it is not free it is not a sin. Or to put it another way: An act is a sin only when we can avoid it; and so far as we cannot avoid it, so far it is not a sin.

What then is the meaning of the teaching which is so often heard among us, namely, "Without the help of God we cannot avoid all sin"; or "Without the help of God we cannot keep all the Commandments" or "We cannot of our own strength avoid all sin; we need the help of God," etc. The meaning is that already explained. It is a concrete and practical proposition, not an abstract metaphysical one. Expressed more exactly

it would mean this: In general principle and in absolute power you can avoid each and every sin which tempts you. But in point of fact, no matter what your general good intentions and resolutions may be, you will not do so. Even with the help of God you are likely enough to fall now and then. But without the help of God you are sure to fall; and almost sure to fall badly and often. Therefore practically the help of God is necessary for you if you are to avoid sin.

That this is the sound orthodox meaning of the proposition was shown by my old professor Father Tepe. When dealing with the proposition that "All men are sinners" and that "No human being will go through life without committing sin," he said: "This is not a universal necessity; but it is a universal fact, vouched for by revelation and confirmed by experience." It is a great stab at self-confidence, a great destroyer of self-complacency, and a great sermon on the fallibility of man and his dependence on the Divine aid.

When we have explained how in the order of pure nature man would possess the power to avoid each and every sin, we must add to this the parallel proposition, that in the order of nature man must also possess the power to carry out each single duty imposed on him by the law of God—for the parallel reason that "*Nemo ad impossible tenetur*," or in other words, a duty is a duty precisely because and so far as a man has the power to perform it, and it ceases to be a duty as soon as the power to perform it is absent. Secondly, in case a man feels temptation so difficult that he is practically sure of giving way, he can always ask God's help in prayer, and will be sure to obtain the necessary strength to resist, and so to avoid sin. Therefore the general conclusion is this: that in the order of pure nature man would possess all the necessary equipment to fulfil the Divine law of right and wrong; and therefore to attain his final happiness thereby.

MAN'S POWER IN THE SUPERNATURAL ORDER.

But when we pass from the natural order to the supernatural, the whole situation is changed. In this order

man can do nothing by his own power—not even to conceive a wish to act. Grace must not only permeate the act in its performance, but also in its commencement; in fact grace must even anticipate and originate the whole act. The acts themselves are performed by our natural faculties, just as in the order of nature; but if grace is absent they will not have anything but a natural value, or deserve more than a natural reward. It is only by grace initiating and permeating our acts that they acquire a supernatural value, and become the acts of adopted sons of God holding relation to supernatural merit and reward.

In this way is explained that saying; so strange on its surface, that "Without grace we can do nothing towards our salvation." By salvation here is meant not merely escape from hell or the securing of final happiness of the natural order. The word "salvation" has a strict theological sense belonging to the supernatural order. Salvation means the saving of our souls from the disasters and calamities which fell on the human race through Adam. This "saving" is achieved only by the Incarnation and Redemption, by which we receive back the adopted sonship and the heirship of the beatific vision. The fruits of Christ's merits are applied to each single soul through sanctifying grace; and any man who is in the state of sanctifying grace is "saved," or in a state of salvation. This state of salvation can be lost only by mortal sin; after which it can be recovered by repentance and forgiveness, and the reinfusion of the sanctifying grace which has been lost by the sin.

It is difficult to find an analogy which will illustrate the fundamental necessity of grace for supernatural salvation; but we can try the following: A check is in itself nothing but a piece of paper. It presupposes on the one hand a deposit in the bank, and secondly it requires the signature of the owner of that deposit. The scrap of paper then immediately acquires the value of \$100, or \$1,000, or \$10,000, or whatever sum may be written upon it. Now the deposit in the bank is habitual grace which puts us in a position to have a check book at all. Actual grace is the signature which gives validity to the

check, and enables it to be realized in cash. When once habitual grace is in our bank we can draw on it by any act of virtue; and the conjunction of habitual grace and actual grace gives supernatural validity to the act, just as the deposit in the bank plus the signature gives validity to the check.

But we must go one step further back. In the supernatural order the deposit in the bank is not of our own acquiring. It is a pure and simple outcome of God's bounty; a participation in the infinite merits of Christ. Nor would our signature have any value unless God gave this sum personally to us, and entered it in our name in the books of the bank. In other words, the whole system is gratuitous, and derives its reality and efficacy from God. We can merely cooperate with God by accepting the deposit and using the power of signing checks which He gives to us. Similarly the whole system of salvation is gratuitously bestowed on us by God, through the medium of grace; and unless grace permeates the whole of our person and our actions, whatever we do will have no value in connection with that system. The analogy does not walk on all fours; but its three legs will suffice to help the idea. —

How ACTUAL GRACE WORKS.

It has always been a mark of Catholic theology to uphold the essential goodness of human nature, and to ascribe its badness to the bad exercise of the free-will under the temptations and provocations which come from a degeneration in degree but not in kind. Grace, the theologians teach, does not destroy or cancel anything positive in nature. It performs first of all the function of elevating nature on the positive side, and of healing its defects and strengthening its weaknesses on the negative side. Theology asserts the absolute necessity of grace to elevate man above the natural, but this elevation does not change nature in any of its functions. It merely permeates those functions and sublimates them; so that the acts which, apart from grace, would be virtues of the natural order, become by grace virtues of the supernatural order. Then again medicinally grace does not give to nature any new or distinct faculties or

powers. It takes the existing natural powers and stimulates them to act more easily and effectually than they would if left to themselves. Grace gives an illumination to the intellect to perceive more keenly the value of virtue, and gives warmth and inspiration to the will to find attraction and congeniality in it; with the effect that a man influenced by grace will find himself stirred to act more promptly and more fully in religious and moral lines than he would feel inclined to if left to himself.

In the supernatural state we can do all those actions which we can do in the natural state, and must do them. Grace does not supersede nature; it does not dispense us from natural exertions but requires them. It is true that grace stimulates them as well as elevates them. But we must respond to the stimulus of grace just as we must respond to the stimulus of nature.

We can do better with grace; but this only means that grace helps us to use our natural faculties more easily and with better effect than if left to ourselves. Grace does not determine the act but suggests it, inspires it, infuses a dash of conviction, a noble attraction which is lost on the sordid soul and embraced and acted on by the noble soul [*gratia antecedens seu excitans.*] Cooperation does not mean passively allowing grace to push us, but actively accepting a force which will not push us unless we consent to it, and does not push but accompanies us when we act on it [*gratia concomitans seu adjuvans.*]

Grace does not drive us like machines. Grace does not carry us out of ourselves and move us as if in a trance or a dream. Grace takes our natural impulses and elevates and intensifies them, or starts in us impulses which would not arise if we were left alone. Grace merely invites our will to embrace and act upon these impulses, and then continues to permeate the will while executing the action which they have suggested. Grace in short does not make our acts possible, for they are already possible by nature. It takes acts which are possible by nature, but which if done without grace would be merely natural. It performs three functions regarding those possible acts: (1) It stirs up our mind and will to wish

to make them actual. (2) It strengthens the mind and will to make them easier. (3) At the same time it permeates their whole substance and makes them supernatural.

CAN CHRISTIANS DO UNSUPERNATURALIZED ACTS?

Now comes the question: When a man is once a Christian, and is in the state of grace and in the supernatural order, will all his actions be supernaturalized as a matter of course, or can some of them remain on the level of merely natural acts? Some theologians have held that to a man in the supernatural state everything is supernaturalized except sin. A more moderate view is that all acts which have a religious and moral bearing done in the state of habitual grace are supernaturalized by actual grace as a matter of course. On the other hand purely indifferent acts such as eating, sleeping, walking, working, etc., which in themselves have no religious or moral bearing, remain natural acts unpermeated by grace, unless they are done with some motive of faith or religion at the back of them. If a man is living in a general attitude of wishing to please and serve God always, such acts can be, and probably are, supernaturalized by reason of the supernatural intention. But if a man is not imbued with any such a religious disposition; if he looks upon life as divided into two parts, one for God and the rest for himself, then those acts which are performed out of purely natural impulse, for sake of enjoyment or material motives without even an implicit reference to God or religion, will remain in the purely natural order, and will have only a natural value.

The practical outcome of this view is to encourage all Christians to cultivate a religious intention as a habit. For this object was invented the practice of the "morning intention"; namely, of saying to God at the beginning of the day: "I offer to thee all the thoughts, words and actions of this day, wishing to do them all for Thy honor and glory," or something to that effect. By such an intention the supernatural elevation of all actions of the day is secured, so that everything counts to salvation; whereas without such an intention many actions of the day

remain unsupernaturalized, and thus count for nothing in the supernatural scheme.

How NATURE AND GRACE COMBINE.

We now come to what is perhaps the most interesting question of all, and one which is of great importance to ourselves, and especially in our work of training up the young. Take any Christian actually living the Christian life. To all appearance he is a natural human being, undistinguishable from any other human being; possessing the same natural fundamental convictions about the law of right and wrong, offered the same choice between them, and applying the same faculty of free-will to the choice; influenced in this choice by pleasure and pain, subject to impulses which need keeping in order, and exercising the same will-power in keeping them in order. By mere examination or analysis we cannot find any perceptible difference between the Christian and the purely natural man; and yet the natural man is merely such, while the Christian is an elevated being, permeated with habitual grace and actuated by operative grace; a stupendous difference which we know by faith, but which we cannot detect in any other way.

The explanation is that grace, according to the theological maxim, is an invisible entity: "*Non cadit sub perceptione.*" Its effects on mind and will are very real, but they are not phenomenally distinguishable. Even the natural man can enjoy a keen appreciation of virtue, and feel a strong attraction in it, springing solely from the fundamental goodness of human nature. The child of grace may enjoy the same aspirations and appreciations by nature, or he may enjoy them by grace; but whether by nature or by grace, we cannot discover the difference; since it is only by faith that we know the existence of grace at all.

We are speaking of course according to the general run. In individual cases the aspirations and impulsions towards goodness may be so extraordinary that we must attribute them to some special and supernatural source, just because they otherwise seem unaccountable. But even here it is a matter not of perception, but of inference from the data of faith. Moreover, such experi-

ences do not occur to the generality of Christians, who seem to manifest nothing more than their better nature in operation, as far as psychological manifestations are concerned.

APPLYING THIS TO EDUCATION.

This being so, the practical question is: How are we to instruct our young in the art of managing their lives and actions on religious and moral lines? We must of course fill them with sound doctrines in every respect, and excite their desires to live up to their Christian profession and model. We must tell them about grace and its value and importance, both in relation to this life and to the next. We must impress on them the need of praying and frequenting the Sacraments as the normal Christian's means of obtaining grace. We must teach them a spirit of dependence on grace, not only to elevate all their actions to the supernatural order, but also to help them over their difficulties in times of temptation; assuring them that unless they trust to grace and secure it in abundance they are sure to fall into sin some time or other, and perhaps frequently.

But meanwhile, what are we to teach them about the part which nature plays in the process of living a Christian life? Under the influence of grace nature is indeed elevated; but it is nature still—it does not cease to be nature. While emphasizing the necessity of grace we must equally emphasize the necessity of our own co-operation with grace; and this cooperation with grace is the conscious work of our natural faculties, elevated though they may be. Always there remains the fact that our conduct is determined by the attitude assumed by our intellect and our will towards religious and moral truths. We must with our intellect know the law, and understand it, and get it stamped deeply in our minds by natural means such as attention and reflection. We must habitually cultivate a right attitude of the will towards such truths, a consistent disposition to love and embrace all that is good, and to hate and eschew all that is bad. Every time a duty comes before us we must stir ourselves up to perform it; every time a temptation comes before us we must stiffen our will to resist it. In the

whole process we must take all the natural means calculated to bring us to our end, which is to preserve the integrity of our moral and religious life, and build ourselves up in all the virtues which belong to it.

FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

Summing up briefly, it is an accepted axiom that the great educational aim is the development of character on sound religious and moral lines. Character was in our book called "Formation of Character" defined as "life dominated by principles." Whether we accept this definition or any other, it always comes back to the same thing, namely, that character consists in the possession of certain qualities of intellect and will which issue in right action, not only sporadically and now and then, but consistently and habitually throughout life. On the part of the intellect, character consists of a deep and firm grasp of religious and moral truths as general principles accepted and appreciated as rules of action; and on the part of the will a habit of choosing according to those principles and acting in regular conformity to them—and this is in spite of every motive which might tend to divert the will into other and wrong lines, whether through the attractions of pleasure or the repulsions of pain.

Now character as thus described is entirely a natural thing, and a thing which lies before all mankind to acquire by purely human efforts. Character is not a thing applicable solely to religious and moral affairs. It comprehends the whole man, and covers the whole range of his activity. In the management of domestic and business life, character can be developed and maintained by a keen grasp of the natural principles by which such departments ought to be dominated, and by a keen application of the will to carry those principles out. A businessman shows character in his commercial work, a general shows character in his military duties, a statesman shows character in his administration of the commonwealth. When we pass from such secular fields to that of religion and morality, the objective indeed receives a new specification; but the apparatus and means by which the objective is pursued remains the same, namely the

grasp of principles by the intellect and their regular and persevering application by the will.

GRACE'S INFLUENCE ON CHARACTER.

When character has thus been recognized as a thing belonging to the natural constitution of man, we have only to ask ourselves what difference is made when grace is brought into consideration. We answer, in the terms of the doctrine already defined: first, that grace does not cancel or destroy the two natural faculties of intellect or will, nor substitute anything else in their place. Grace merely permeates these two faculties, and elevates them into a higher relation to supernatural ends. Secondly, grace affords a help to the natural activities by enhancing the light of the intellect and the zest of the will in right directions, so as to increase the faculty both of intellect and will, and to help them both in their operations. At the same time the psychology remains the same. Our judgment and choice made under the influence of grace does not become a recognizably different thing from what it would be in nature. It is only by faith that we know that such extra aid is present in us, because we have prayed for it and trust that God has answered our prayer. This consciousness of Divine help is calculated indeed to stimulate us to greater confidence in facing difficulties and temptations; but it does not dispense us from the exercise of our faculties, or from the effort of willing for ourselves the thing which we see ought to be willed.

As theologians put it, whenever an act is done under the influence of grace it is not the product of one activity alone. It is not achieved by God alone in us, nor is it achieved by ourselves apart. The whole act proceeds at once from two joint principles or causes. It is at once wholly done by grace, and wholly done by ourselves; the conflation of two activities, natural and supernatural, issuing in one and the same natural-and-supernatural result. From the ontological side the act is substantially supernatural, because elevated and actuated by grace; from the psychological side, as falling under our perception and consciousness, the act is substantially a natural act, and grace pervades it as a sublimating quality.

The conclusion therefore is that in all our religious

and moral acts, we must adopt and make our own the maxim of St. Ignatius: "Act as if everything depends upon yourself, but pray as if everything depended upon God." This means that we should apply our intellect and will to the conduct of life just as if there were no such thing as grace to help us; but secondly, we must pray to God for the help of grace, as without grace our acts will be devoid of value towards supernatural salvation, and there is a danger that in times of stress we may give way and fall into sin—even though we have, absolutely speaking, the power to avoid it if we only wish to do so.

No priest who has once grasped his theology and retained memory of it will need to be told anything that we have just written. But a good deal of our religious and moral training in schools is in hands of brothers, nuns or lay-teachers who have not done theology. Hence the question arises whether the principles bearing on this subject are always sufficiently familiar to our teachers; whether certain failures to build up character in our pupils, and the numerous collapses which take place after leaving school, are not due to this deficiency; and if so in what way can our methods be rendered more efficient and more effectual? It was to lead up to this question that the foregoing series of notes has been written.

Is Catholicism of Pagan Origin?

— ERNEST R. HULL, S.J.
From the Bombay "Examiner."

THE question of similarities in different religions is one from which an immense amount of futile polemic has been evolved, solely and simply because people have lost sight of certain elementary instincts of human nature common to the whole race. The first phase we remember of this line of reasoning was that of the old-fashioned Protestants, who tried to trace back a number of Catholic usages to pagan times, and to condemn them therefore as corruptions of the Christian re-

ligion. Not to go into the point systematically, we recall the view that the celebration of Christmas was derived from solstice-worship; that Candlemas was merely an adaptation of the Roman Lupercalia; that the cult of Our Lady was derived from that of Minerva or Pallas Athene; that the use of incense at Mass was borrowed from the Roman sacrifices; that even the Mass itself was supposed to be a copy of the Mithraic worship, the round host representing the sun; that St. Valentine's day and its queer customs were a continuation of a certain pagan usage; that holy water was lustral water Christianized, etc., etc.

The answer given to this kind of attack was to refute the falsities which were alleged, but to acknowledge the truths, and then to go to the root of the matter, which lies in human nature. Whatever the Church had assimilated of pagan usage was something quite natural and proper in itself; adopted because it was human, not because it was pagan. Wherever the religious instinct exists, it must issue in action some way or other. Belief in any God leads to some form of prayer accompanied with symbolical actions—in other words, liturgy and ceremonies. The use of water as symbolic of purification, and incense as a sweet odor ascending to heaven, were sure to come in. So also the use of images to represent sacred objects; the frequentation of special shrines by pilgrimages; the holding of special festivals commemorating religious ideas or events; the making of vows and their fulfilment; the creation of a priesthood and of sacrifice; the adoption of an ascetical life among the more devout, with fasting, prayer and separation from the world.

All these are the natural way in which humanity will and must express its religious sentiments and aspirations, no matter whether the theology be a high or low one, a pure or corrupt one. If these things have already been adopted by mankind while groping in religious darkness, that is no reason why they should not also be adopted by mankind when it emerges from darkness into light. Human nature is the same, and has the same tendencies and the same rights. First possession does not constitute

a monopoly ; nor does the fact that these natural methods have been adopted by a false religion afford any reason why they should be made taboo to the true religion.

Hence it was part of the wisdom of the Church, when converting new peoples, to take into account the religious usages to which they were accustomed ; to adopt what was good or innocent in them, or to provide an equivalent substitute, so as to enable the people to embrace the new faith without too severe a shock. Hence the instruction given by Gregory the Great to St. Augustine, not to pull down pagan temples, but to Christianize them by thrusting out the false gods and introducing the true God in their place. It is not a reproach to the Church that she should have adopted from paganism everything which was natural, innocent or good therein. On the contrary, it brings out the fact that grace does not destroy nature, but presupposes it and perfects it.

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

Of later development was the theory that Christianity was a copy of Buddhism. Buddha lived four and a half centuries before Christ ; and it is clear that under Asoka (about 250 B. C.) Buddhist missionaries spread their teaching in the West, e. g. in Syria and Egypt. The Essenian sect in Palestine was probably a group of Jews impregnated with Buddhist ideas ; and perhaps the Therapeutae of Egypt (whom Eusebius took to be Christian ascetics) were also under the same Buddhist inspiration.

Whether early Christian asceticism, in the time of St. Paul the first Hermit and St. Anthony, was suggested by these earlier and non-Christian examples, no one can say absolutely. There is no proof that it was, nor is there the least need for such influence. Pious people, struck with the corruption and seductiveness of the world, can only choose between two courses. One is to remain in the world and preach a crusade for its reform ; the other is to retire from the world and attend to their own personal spirituality. If such people are Buddhists their asceticism will take Buddhist molds ; if Jews, it will take Jewish molds ; if Christians it will take Christian molds. The human apparatus will be the same in each

case, and there is not the least reason to suppose that one borrowed the idea from the other.

Hence when we find that the early Buddhists in India had monasteries with a routine of prayer and contemplation, with the public discipline of the chapter-house and of the cell, and with vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, we recognize here a complete parallel with the forms of Christian monastic asceticism; but there is not the least reason for inferring from the similarity that the one borrowed from the other. Either might have happened. If the Buddhists were first, the Christian might have got the suggestion from them; but there is no proof of it, nor is there any need to suppose it. If we find altogether separate tribes cutting their hair or shaving in a similar manner, no one deems it necessary to suppose imitation; for human nature in both cases might easily work out its usages in the same way. And so with ascetical observances. When once the ascetical idea is conceived, the human mind is practically sure of thinking out a similar way of practising it because this is practically the only obvious way, and there is hardly any room for choice. As a matter of fact it is extremely dubious whether Buddhist monasticism took its full shape before the time of Christ. Those points of close resemblance may possibly have come later, and might even have been borrowed from Christianity if they were borrowed at all. But there is no need for the borrowing theory. The unity of the human race, and the uniform constitution of the human mind, makes it inevitable that when the general end is the same, men independently of each other will hit upon the same obvious means of putting the idea into effect. The differences will not be in the substance of the system, but in the accessories.

A FEW INSTANCES.

Take a few instances: The making of images to represent objects which are absent or out of sight is altogether instinctive to man. The cave men of very archaic times scraped pictures of reindeer fights on slabs of mammoth tusk, and painted figures on the walls of their cave-dwellings. Their gods would naturally be imagined in human form; and being invisible, they would begin

to carve images to embody their idea of that form, and to provide a concrete center on which to focus their worship, the image standing for the god. Similarly with great chiefs who were deified after death; similarly with great saints. If a legend arose about God coming down to the assistance of mankind, an image of such an avatar would be conceived and executed. As regards the early Christians, at first they stood aloof from pictorial representations just because idolatry was associated with such subjects; but when all danger of relapse disappeared it was a perfectly natural thing to develop the practice of representing Christ the Redeemer and the Saints, first in wall-figures, and afterwards in statues.

Then again, what is a pilgrimage except the flocking to some special religious center associated with some sacred person or event? Buddhist, Hindu or Christian, it is all the same. One shrine may embody an error, the other may embody a truth; but the pilgrimage itself is merely the human way of taking notice of what is believed, and of showing interest in it by visiting the place where the event occurred.

Turn to any other idea, say of sacrifice to God and a sacrificing priesthood; liturgical forms and ceremonies; the use of incense or consecrated water; the use of beads to count short prayers with; the burning of lamps before shrines; ceremonies connected with birth, initiation, sickness, death and burial. Humanity agrees instinctively in these things, and in the way of manipulating them. In themselves they are natural, reasonable, proper, indifferent, innocent and obvious to all mankind. The difference lies in the underlying idea and intention, in the truth or falsity of the object to which they are applied. If Vishnu's avatars were true the reverence paid to them would be good; if false it is bad. If Krishna were a God, the worship paid to him as Divine would be excellent; not so if he is merely a deified man. If the Ganges really did take away sin like Baptism, nothing could be more virtuous than to go and bathe there, and so secure the saving grace of God. If not, the delusion becomes pathetic. And so it goes on. It is not the external form, the tangible method, which counts. What

makes the difference is this: whether the means adopted naturally by mankind in general is in any given case a means to a good or to a bad end, to a true or a false worship.

PURITANIC ATROPHY.

The spirit of Protestantism, which set itself up against the universal sentiment of humanity in these matters, was essentially a narrow, one-sided spirit. Chesterton has described the Puritan as a man who worshiped God fiercely with his intellect only, and excluded the rest of his nature. Hence the narrowness and repulsiveness of Puritanism, which over-developed one faculty to monstrous disproportions, and doomed the rest to atrophy from non-use. Man, says the same author, is radically and primitively a poet, a dramatist, a liturgist, a symbolist; or in one word, an artist. Dry scientific, intellectualism lies within the range of his capacities; but it is the last and latest in development, and therefore the least human of all his attributes; a thing moreover which is full of danger, for if emphasized it is almost sure to turn out something quite inhuman and unnatural.

The Puritan would have nothing but literalism. He must have an explicit interpretation of Scripture, an explicit formulation of doctrine as hard and definite as a legal code. He reveled in clear and drastic determinations; water-tight compartments, so to speak. He was not content to view man as the half-noble, half-savage creature which he really is, a curious mixture of good and bad, of weakness and strength. No, man must be either good or bad absolutely. So they made his nature hopelessly corrupt and incapable of doing anything, and then transformed it into holiness and heavenly virtue by the magic stroke of imputation and "putting on Christ." There must be no wavering about human destiny; no touch-and-go about a man getting to heaven or hell. He must be booked definitely for one or the other; predestined or reprobated, as God by an arbitrary decree should determine. The predestined were called "elect," and there was nothing debatable about them. One Christian could not look up to another, because no Christian could help himself; none could be better than another.

He was made a saint absolutely by the imputation of Christ's infinite merits, and there was an end of the matter.

To this dry and arid intellectualism in dogma was added a similar dry and arid intellectualism in worship; the fierce recitation of fiercely literal prayers telling God things which He knew, and hardly asking him for things, because in the system of predestination and imputation there was nothing to ask for. The only thing they *were* energetic in asking for was that God should smite his enemies hip and thigh; and *his* enemies were *their* enemies without fail. There must be no ceremonies, no ornaments, no functions; only dry monotone reading, listened to in a sitting posture because kneeling, even before God, was Romish superstition and vain observance. Art became to the Puritan an abomination, worldly vanity and frivolity, stubble for the burning. No Christian could dare to laugh and enjoy life. His face must be as long and solemn as a fiddle. Nor was there any sociability in religion, no human fellowship, no communion of saints. Each man stood *solus cum solo*, solitary, naked in the awful presence of the Calvinistic God. Processions were unthinkable, for where in the world could people want to process to? Was not God *everywhere*? No frequentation of any special center, for is not the earth the Lord's and the fullness thereof? There was to be nothing elastic, nothing jubilant, nothing artistic, nothing poetical in religion, nothing symbolic—in short, nothing human. No wonder if they looked upon the Catholic Church as an abomination, just because it was so fully human!

The Puritan spirit lasted in Protestantism for at least 200 years. Where it prevailed it made religion a joyless, long-faced thing which ordinary humanity could not love, which it could not believe in. The solemn gravity and long-facedness looked so unnatural that it suggested hypocrisy. The minister became a killjoy and ogre, and lost all prestige. And that is why the masses of the English people look upon religion as a thing that has to be put on once a week together with a black suit, and gone through stolidly, with a feeling of relief when the

day is over, and human nature resumes its spell of naturalness for six days more.

You will see, from what has been said, why it is that the Catholic religion looks so much like the religions of the rest of humanity, and why the Protestant religion looks so startlingly unique. It is because Protestantism means the one-sided development of one part of man's nature, and that the least human part, at the expense of the rest; while Catholicism takes humanity all round as it presents itself, and finds nothing to suppress except sin. All the rest is to be cherished and cultivated on its own natural lines, and to be enlisted in the cause and service of religion—so that God may have the worship of the whole man, and not merely the worship of one artificially-obtruded part of him.

Our Country's Debt to Catholic Schools

R. H. SMITH, S.M.

OUR Catholic schools are essential, not only to the propagation and glory of the Church, but also to the welfare and prosperity of our beloved country. I shall sketch their mutual dependence, the debt which each owes to the other: Standing out conspicuously among the nations of the world today rises the distinctive nationality of our glorious Republic. Its greatness does not depend on material triumphs, but on something higher and nobler. The glory of America is that it is the home of freedom. Ours is a nation built upon the recognition of the fundamental rights of man to their fullest extent. It rests on the broad foundation of popular rights and individual liberty. That liberty we hold dearer than our own lives. It is the true source of all our prosperity. It is the cornerstone of American civilization. On it depend our existence as a free people and our destiny as a great nation. It is to the principles which the founders made the basis of the government of our Republic that we owe the marvelous progress the Church has made in this country.

Catholics rejoice in the independence which is ours by the guarantee of our Constitution. Perfect liberty of action, unhampered by Government alliance or State support, is more favorable to the progress of the Church than the most powerful despotism in her behalf. It was due to this Constitutional freedom also that the Church has been able to accomplish such splendid results in the important work of Catholic education. In spite of the obstacles and difficulties of all kinds, in spite of the heavy financial burden imposed on parents by payment of the double tax, Catholic education in this country has grown and expanded until we have today a system so complete and successful that it challenges the wonder and admiration of every thinking man of the day. And all this would have been impossible without the principle of freedom of education guaranteed by the Constitution and handed down as one of the essentials of our civilization and a condition of our national greatness. We thankfully acknowledge the debt our Catholic schools owe to our country. But they have rendered in return transcendent services. They are nurseries of the purest patriotism; they stand a strong bulwark against the evils that threaten the nation; and they are, after the Church itself, the surest hope of the perpetuity of the Republic and of the maintenance of its free institutions.

CHURCH TEACHES LIBERTY.

The rights and liberties on which our Constitution is based have long been embodied in the teachings of the Church and have often formed the basis of her actions. The ideals, morals and laws which have molded our civilization are the heritage of the Catholic Church. Catholic patriotism is written on every page of our country's history. The one sentiment that animates the breast of every Catholic citizen of this land is devotion to the Government, the Constitution and the flag. That is the patriotism that is taught in our Catholic schools, and of its sincerity our schools are now giving the strongest practical proof. In this hour of our country's supreme trial, there stands forth conspicuously the splendid devotion of the sons of our Catholic schools. Thirty-five per cent. at least of the army and navy are Catholics.

The blood of our Catholic boys has already generously bedewed the fields of heroic France, and millions more stand ready and eager to take their place under the Stars and Stripes, and if need be in its honor and defense to lay down their lives.

MAKES REPUBLIC STRONG.

In our schools is found also all that makes for the strength and the perpetuity of the Republic. The strength and safety of the Republic are not in wealth and material prosperity, but in the virtue of its people; and unless that virtue is inculcated in the youth of the country, unless a remedy can be found for the evils which show the decay of that virtue, the knell of our country's destiny has sounded. The State system of education, excellent as it is in other respects, has banished Christ and His teachings from its door; and secular instruction is powerless to provide a solid foundation and a sufficient sanction for morality. There is no morality without religion. The only remedy then is to give the youth of the nation to virtue in the adamantine rock of religion. And this remedy is found in our Catholic schools. They stand a bulwark against the tide of evils that threaten to overwhelm us. In them is found the living fountain whose saving waters are for the healing of the nation.

What incentive more powerful could move the heart of the Catholic and the patriot to renewed energy in the cause of our Catholic schools? "Liberty of Education" is our watchword in the face of the present tendency of the national Government to encroach upon the rights of the State; in the face of the still more alarming tendency to place all education in the hands of the Government. It is against the dearest and most fundamental principles of our Republic for the Government to take away from parents the God-given right to the education of their children, or to use an educational system as a means of directing or controlling the cultural and industrial life of the nation. Let us cover the land with our Catholic schools, both for the welfare of the Church and the liberty and glory of our country.

Books on Apologetics and Controversy

Compiled by JOHN C. REVILLE, S. J.

Raupert, J. Godfrey:

Christ and the Powers of Darkness..	Herder,	\$1.00
Modern Spiritism	"	\$1.25
Roads to Rome.....	"	\$0.75
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The author of these books is an authority on all that concerns Spiritism. What the *American Catholic Quarterly* says of one of his volumes may be applied to all that he wrote on the subject: "If a tithe of the facts presented by Mr. Raupert can be believed and he seems to know whereof he speaks, we are forced to recognize the presence amongst us of a very active and pernicious satanic agency and to dread the return of the days of a widespread demoniac possession."

Rickaby, The Rev. Joseph, S. J.:

Development	Benziger,	\$0.35
Thoughts on Bishop Gore's "Roman Catholic Claims."		

Rivington, The Rev. Luke:

Authority	Benziger,	\$0.50
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Roche, The Rev. George R., S. J.:

The Divinity of Jesus Christ.....	Herder,	\$0.25
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Roh, The Rev. F., S. J.:

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Ruville, Albert von:

Back to Holy Church.....	Longmans,	\$1.20
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A convincing reply to the false charges brought against the Catholic Church in Dr. Littledale's "Plain Reasons."

Sasia, The Rev. Joseph, S. J.:

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This is one of the most illuminating treatises in English on the difficult subject with which it deals. "The author has ranged through profane and sacred literature of all times," says *America*, "and gleaning the best has woven it into a connected treatise on man, his soul, his destiny, the possibility of attaining it, the possibility of losing it, the immortality of the human soul, heaven and hell.

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Schanz, The Rev. Paul:

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An exhaustive and learned work in three volumes, intended for the scholar and the priest; built on the lines of Hettinger's similar apology.

Schouuppe, The Rev. F. X., S. J.:

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struction Benziger, \$1.00

Something more than a mere catechism; a simple but substantial volume of fundamental apologetics. Catholic high schools should find it very useful.

Scott, The Rev. Martin J., S. J.:

God and Myself..... Kenedy, \$1.00

This "Inquiry Into the True Religion" is a clear, positive and an easily-followed investigation into the fact that Christ is God and that He established a Church.

Searle, The Rev. George M., C. S. P.:

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Admirably suited for the busy American who sincerely is looking for the truth.

Seiple, The Rev. Henry, C., S. J.:

Anglican Ordinations Benziger, \$0.35

Puts in a nutshell the argument against the validity of Anglican ordinations.

Sharpe, The Rev. A. B.:

Questions and Answers on the Catholic Church Herder, \$0.35

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Sharpe, The Rev. A. B., and The Rev. F. Aveling:

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Presented with all the vigor and wide scholarship of the great Archbishop of Baltimore, the work in its day did uncalculable good.

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Sullivan, The Rev. John F.:

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Wilmers, The Rev. W., S. J.:

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